the request for declaring Telugu as a classical language had been forwarded to the Sahitya Akademi. The same answer was given. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Committee has recommended to recognise Telugu as a classical language. If not, I want an assurance from the Minister to fix a time-frame for the Committee.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, the demand for recognising the Telugu language as a classical language is also before the Government. But, as I have already said, this matter is not with the Home Ministry. This matter is with the Ministry of Culture. As it was wrongly referred to us, we have not just thrown it out and we are answering the question. I am not in a position to give any kind of assurance.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Sir, the straight question to the hon. Minister is that a request has been made to the Minister for Culture and to the Minister for Home Affairs that Telugu should be recognised as a classical language. The Minister had answered this question in last March that they were going to refer it to a Committee of Experts. the Committee has been constituted. I would like to know from the Minister by which time this assurance will be honoured and whether there is any time-frame for that. Or, does he go on referring to the same thing? I request the hon. Minister to answer this.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, I think, I have replied to this kind of questions.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: There should be a straight answer.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: No, there can't be any straight answer. Let us understand that we are all very responsible Members sitting in this august House. Each one of us appreciates the value of culture and language and that is why we shall have to take a considered view. It is true that Telugu language is a rich language; Kannada language is also a rich language. There are 22 languages included in the Eighth Schedule and there are 37 demands pending with the Government for their inclusion in the Eighth Schedule. Now, these issues are real issues. If we don't handle these issues in an appropriate manner, instead of uniting, it will become a divisive force. That is why I request that it should not be done. (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please. Your question is over. (*Interruptions*)... Please, hon. Member. (*Interruptions*)... No. (*Interruptions*)... Please, hon. Member. (*Interruptions*)... If the Members wish to have a discussion on this, that is a separate matter. (*Interruptions*)... But it is not in the Question Hour. (*Interruptions*)... Q. No. 283. (*Interruptions*)...

FTA with other countries

*283. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the names of countries with which India has so far entered into Free Trade Agreement (FTA) or similar agreements; and

(b) the specific industries which have been adversely affected by these agreements?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) India has signed Free Trade Agreement (FTAs) with Sri Lanka, Singapore, Nepal and Bhutan. India has also signed South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) with Bangladesh,

Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. India has signed Preferential Trade Agreement (PTAs) with Afghanistan, Chile and MERCOSUR, and is also signatory to the regional preferential trading agreement, namely, Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (Bangladesh, China, India, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka as members) & Global System of Trade Preference (open to all developing countries). India has an Early Harvest Scheme with Thailand where tariff concessions are exchanged on 82 products.

(b) Some of the industries which complained being affected by the FTAs relate to Vanaspati, Copper, Zink Oxide from Nepal and Sri Lanka. Appropriate measures were put in place to safeguard their interests.

SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Sir, there are some newspaper reports that the Government intends to enter into an FTA or MFN kind of agreement with China, as part of its larger geo-political boundary dispute settlement with that country. I would like to know from the Minister whether this is true. If this is true, would this not have a significant negative effect on the Indian small and medium scale industries?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, the factual position is as follows. India has, as of now, five operational FTAs. It has six operational perferential trade agreements. Eleven FTAs are under negotiations and another seven are under consideration. The India-China FTA which the hon. Member is referred to falls under the category of FTAs being considered, not even being negotiated. I can assure the hon. Member that the decision to enter into an FTA with any country is taken after a great deal of consideration on which industries or which sectors of economy should be offered for liberalisation.

SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister then give us an assurance in this House that further FTAs will now only be entered into after carefully evaluating the effect of FTAs on the industries affected and prepare a roadmap of assistance for small and medium scale industries thus affected?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, the hon. Member knows as an example that for the past three-and-a-half years, India has been negotiating an FTA with ASEAN. One of the reasons why we have not concluded the FTA has precisely been the need to protect sensitive sectors of our economy, particularly agriculture, textiles and small-scale industry. The assurance which the hon. Member seeks is implicit in the approach of the Government. The Government is extraordinarily careful in entering into these FTAs. I can assure the hon. Member that whatever FTA is entered into that is done in the most transparent and most consultative manner. In fact, one of the criticisms against the FTA is that there is a very large negative list. The concept of negative list is that we put into the negative list those items that are not subject to any form of liberalisation as part of free trade agreement.

DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Sir, Nepal has announced that they are ready to have an Indian rupee as part of the FTA transaction. I would like to know whether the Government of India has got any proposal to have common currency as part of FTA transaction, especially with SAFTA countries.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, the question of common currency arises only after we progress beyond an FTA into a customs union and a common monetary union. As of now, our major task has been to stabilise and consolidate FTAs. We have had a trade treaty with Nepal for quite some time. It is working well. It has been entered into keeping in mind, not just

the economic relationship we have with Nepal, but more importantly the political and strategic importance of that country.

SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Is the hon. Minister aware that by the Early Harvest Scheme, automobile component manufacturers and automobile mission, which the Prime Minister unveiled, are going to be affected severely? Are there any complaints made by different associations of automobile component manufacturers? If so, what remedial steps are being initiated?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, the Early Harvest Scheme, which the hon. Member is talking about, is a preferential trade agreement, which India has entered into with Thailand, where we are offering mutual tariff concessions on 82 items. I would just like to remind the hon. Member — I want to make here only a political point before I get into the economics of the trade agreement— that the Early Harvest Agreement was one of the agreements signed by the previous Government of which the BJD was a part. Since the Government is a continuing entity, we have continued with the Early Harvest Agreement. Now, Sir, under this agreement, 82 items have been given for liberalisation. In the last two-and-a-half years, it is true that imports from Thailand have gone up three-fold; whereas, exports from India have gone up only two-fold. So, *prima facie,* it might appear that this Early harvest Agreement has benefited Thailand more than it has benefited India. The numbers certainly bear it out. There are certain sectors of the economy like the auto components, electronic components, etc., where we have received complaints or Memoranda that this Early Harvest Agreement is working to our detriment. The reason for this is, we have an inverted duty structure. This is a legacy of the past. The legacy is that the duty on raw materials has been very high. The duty on components has been lower than that and the duty on finished products has been the lowest. The Government of India has set up a Committee to look into all these imbalances in the duty structure. The duty structure and the anomalies are being rectified so that domestic manufacturing is not at a disadvantage, and it is not cheaper to import the finished product, as supposed to be making those items at home. So, I would like to assure the hon. Member that the Early Harvest Agreement anomalies have been looked into most carefully.

SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Sir, my supplementary is this. Would the hon. Minister be pleased to explain how these Free Trade Agreements affect the agricultural market in the country? The import of palm oil has already become a grave issue in Kerala. Again, what are the major provisions in the proposed trade agreement with the ASEAN?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, I would only be too pleased to answer this because this is a very sensitive issue as far as Kerala is concerned. I would like to assure all the hon. Members that on any Free Trade Agreement, which has been negotiated or is under negotiation, agriculture is in the negative list. this is a categorical statement that I am making, that all agricultural items, sensitive agricultural items particularly, are in the negative list. Now, as far as Kerala is concerned, there are sensitivities on spices, particularly; on rubber and a whole lot of plantation crops, these are not a part of the liberalisation programme. In fact, on the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement, India's offer is particularly on pepper. On cardamon, there is no liberalisation; on coconut, there is no liberalisation. In so far as pepper is concerned, the only offer that India has made to ASEAN is to reduce the existing level of import duty from 70 per cent to 50 per cent by the year 2018, not today, but by the year 2018. So, I would like to assure the hon. Member that there is absolutely no question of liberalising the import of agricultural commodities. The second supplementary which he has put is on palm oil. I am aware that the import of palm oil has had somewhat of a deleterious impact on the prices of

coconut oil particularly, in Kerala. But I would like to ask the hon. Member to bear in mind the fact that palm oil is imported into India because of the fact that our domestic edible oil production is simply not sufficient to meet the increase in consumption. We are importing palm oil to meet the domestic demand. Palm oil is consumed all over the country. But coconut oil is consumed only in Kerala. And, my own experience is that a large number of consumers in Kerala prefer palm oil to coconut oil.

*284. [The questioner (Shri Mahendra Mohan) was absent. For answer *vide* page 23]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 285 ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री सत्यव्रत चतुर्वेदी: सर, मुझे एक बात कहनी है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please don't interrupt ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री सत्यव्रत चतुर्वेदी: आप कृपा करके सुन लीजिए।

श्री सभापति: नहीं। प्लीज।

श्री सत्यव्रत चतुर्वेदी: सर पिछले दिनों भी SEZ के मामले पर एक प्रश्न आया था। आपको स्मरण होगा, उस समय भी हम उस पर कोई चर्चा नहीं कर पाए थे।

MR. CHAIRMAN: We can have a discussion. But this is not the time ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री सत्यव्रत चतुर्वेदी: आज भी जिस मैम्बर ने क्वेश्चन दिया है, वे नहीं हैं। श्रीमन्, दाल में काला नहीं, पूरी दाल काली नजर आ रही है और यह लग रहा है कि कुछ मिलीभगत है।

श्री सभापति: प्लीज, प्लीज।

श्री सत्यव्रत चतुर्वेदी: पहले मैच फिक्सिंग होती थी, अब क्या प्रश्न फिक्सिंग भी होने लग गई है?

श्री सभापति: क्वेश्चन 285।

श्री सत्यव्रत चतुर्वेदी: श्रीमन्, इतने महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर सदन में कोई चर्चा न हो सके, सवाल न पूछे जा सकें ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: सवाल पूछिए, मगर ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सत्यव्रत चतुर्वेदी: आपको सदन के बाकी सदस्यों के हितों का और अधिकारों का संरक्षण करना चाहिए और अगर क्वेश्चन देने वाला सदस्य नहीं भी है, तो ऐसे महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्नों को आपको लेना चाहिए। ये हाऊस की प्रॉपर्टी बन जाता है, अगर प्रश्न रह जाते हैं।

श्री सभापति: अगर प्रश्न देने वाला मैम्बर प्रेजेंट नहीं है तो सवाल पूछा नहीं जा सकता, रिटर्न जवाब मौजूद है।

दिल्ली और मुम्बई के बीच औद्योगिक कारिडोर

*285. **श्री दत्ता मेघे:** क्या **वाणिज्य और उद्योग** मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या भारत और जापान की साझेदारी से दिल्ली और मुंबई के बीच औद्योगिक कारिडोर बनाने की योजना को अंतिम रूप दे दिया गया है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसकी विस्तृत रूपरेखा क्या है;

(ग) दिल्ली और मुम्बई के बीच इस औद्योगिक कारिडोर में किन-किन क्षेत्रों को सम्मिलित किया गया है; और

(घ) सरकार ने इन क्षेत्रों के विकास के लिए क्या-क्या योजनाएं बनाई हैं?